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Sustainable development: follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Review of United Nations system support to small island developing States

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States have both underscored the importance of United Nations system support for efforts directed towards sustainable development in small island developing States. Over the years, the ways in which this support has been extended have varied among United Nations entities. On the whole, the organizations of the United Nations system have provided a wide range of targeted support for small island developing States in relation to the Mauritius Strategy, in accordance with their respective mandates. There are gaps and room for improvement, however, in the provision of this support, including in the delivery of coordinated and coherent programmes for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Collectively, relevant United Nations organizations are also committed to providing normative, analytical and capacity-building support to small island developing States with a view to enhancing international recognition of their special situation and helping to strengthen their resilience in the face of multiple challenges.

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I. Introduction

1. The unique sustainable development challenges facing small island developing States were first formally recognized by the international community when it articulated their special case in chapter 17 of Agenda 21,[1] adopted in 1992. The Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States ("Barbados Programme of Action"),[2] adopted two years later, acknowledges the important role of all relevant organs, programmes and organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective areas of expertise and mandates, in supporting and supplementing national efforts in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

2. Since the adoption of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States ("Mauritius Strategy for Implementation"),[3] the need to review and enhance the effectiveness, coherence and coordination of United Nations system support for small island developing States has been recognized in their various resolutions by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. In the outcome document of the High-level Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, adopted by the Assembly, in its resolution 65/2, Heads of State and Government, Ministers and representatives of Member States called upon the Secretary-General to conduct a comprehensive review and examine ways to enhance the coherence and coordination of United Nations support for those States and to report to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, putting forward concrete recommendations to Member States in this regard.

3. The objective of the present report is to review the progress made by the United Nations system in mainstreaming and integrating the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation into its mandates, programmes and processes, in order to promote the coherence and coordination of United Nations support to small island developing States. The report also formulates recommendations on how such support can be better targeted and more efficient and effective.

4. The report takes into account information gathered from a variety of sources, including websites, reports and publications of United Nations organizations, documentation prepared by the Small Island Developing States Unit, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, for the consideration of the Committee for Development Policy at its twelfth session, inputs provided by members of the Inter-agency Consultative Group on Small Island Developing States, commissioned papers surveying some of the issues covered in this report, and direct inputs and views of Member States.

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[3] *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

5. Section II below reviews how United Nations entities have mainstreamed support for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy into their respective organizational structures; how issues relevant to small island developing States are dealt with at the global, regional and country levels; and how support is provided to small island developing States in four main domains, namely, the normative, capacity-building, analytical and coordinating work of the United Nations system. A number of recommendations are contained in section III.

II. Support provided by the United Nations system to small island developing States

6. The present section outlines relevant mandates of United Nations entities, institutional aspects, programmes and projects.

A. Mandates

7. At the global level, the Small Island Developing States Unit at United Nations Headquarters has been entrusted with a broad range of functions aimed at providing support for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy (see General Assembly resolution 60/194). The Unit provides technical assistance and advice, supports intergovernmental processes, leads inter-agency coordination, and reports on progress made in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States is mandated to undertake advocacy work in support of small island developing States, in partnership with the relevant entities of the United Nations, and to mobilize resources for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy (see A/56/645).

8. At the regional level, pursuant to the Mauritius Strategy the regional commissions are entrusted with responsibility for advocacy and the coordination of support to small island developing States. The regional commissions have a comparative advantage in facilitating coordination and collaboration with regard to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy at the regional level. Two regional commissions have subregional offices that facilitate coordination. Those offices are the Pacific Operations Centre of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).[4]

9. While the respective mandates of the organizations of the United Nations system relate to specific programme areas of relevance to the Mauritius Strategy, together they are directed towards implementing many of its objectives. The agencies, funds and programmes therefore play a major role in assisting small island developing States in implementing the Mauritius Strategy in various programme areas. Among these organizations are the United Nations Development Programme

[4] See resolution 65 (XXI) of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, contained in part III of the report of the Committee on its twenty-first session (16 and 17 January 2006) (LC/CAR/L.86).

(UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP),[5] the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),[6] the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD),[7] the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

10. The Convention on Biological Diversity,[8] the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[9] and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[10] cover important issues highlighted in the Mauritius Strategy. The Conference of the Parties to each of these three Conventions provides a global forum in which small island developing States can articulate their needs and priorities and leverage support from the United Nations system.

B. Institutional issues

Specific institutional set-ups in support of small island developing States

11. In paragraph 128 of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Secretary-General was requested to invite the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to consider the establishment of focal points for its implementation. The response to this call has been mixed.

12. Only 10 United Nations organizations have designated a specific focal point for small island developing States. The ECLAC Caribbean office has 46 regular budget positions, 33 substantive and 13 administrative, while the ESCAP Pacific office has nine regular and two extrabudgetary posts. UNEP has a dedicated focal point at its headquarters in Nairobi and a regional focal point for the Caribbean within its Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, in Panama City. UNESCO has a Section for Small Islands and Indigenous Knowledge, consisting of five regular and four extrabudgetary staff. Others have a focal point dealing with small island developing States as part of a broader portfolio, as is the case for FAO. Where the functions of the focal point are carried out by a regional office, the focus tends to be on coordination of regional activities rather than on the global coordination envisaged in the Barbados Programme of Action.

13. At the United Nations Secretariat, given the zero budget growth over many years, the number of posts within the Small Island Developing States Unit has not increased: the Unit had four regular posts and three extrabudgetary staff around the time of the convening of the International Meeting in Mauritius in 2005 and the numbers and composition remain the same today. This team conducts all normative, analytical and capacity-building activities. One positive development of note since

[5] See Governing Council decision 22/13 of 7 February 2003 (A/58/25, annex).

[6] See resolution 48 adopted by the General Conference at its thirty-second session (29 September-17 October 2003).

[7] See the Accra Accord adopted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at its twelfth session in 2008 (TD/442 and Corr.1, sect. II).

[8] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

[9] Ibid., vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[10] Ibid., vol. 1954, No. 33480.

2005 has been the fact that the Unit now reports directly to the Director of the Division for Sustainable Development. Also, the Office of the High Representative now has one post dedicated to small island developing States, which did not exist in 2005.

14. There are other institutional arrangements. UNCTAD deals with small island developing States as part of its special programmes. The Convention on Biological Diversity has a programme of work on island biodiversity, supported by a dedicated staff. Other bodies deal with the issues of concern to small island developing States as part of their overall programme of work.

Mainstreaming the Mauritius Strategy into work programmes within the United Nations system

15. The mainstreaming and integration of activities related to small island developing States into the work programmes of the United Nations system have been identified as key for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy (see General Assembly resolution 65/156). The ways in which this has been carried out differ from entity to entity. ECLAC has effectively mainstreamed and integrated issues of concern to small island developing States into its work through the establishment of its Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. In the case of ESCAP, the priorities of Pacific small island developing States have been integrated into the work of the Commission through the work programme of its Pacific Operations Centre. Most United Nations organizations have mainstreamed issues relating to small island developing States into their programme of work without necessarily resorting to the establishment of a dedicated programme. UNEP takes an institution-wide strategic approach so as to ensure that issues related to the needs and priorities of small island developing States are mainstreamed into its programme of work. UNESCO, with activities coordinated by its small island developing States focal point, uses the intersectoral platform established in 2007 for the sustainable development of small island developing States to pursue an integrated approach in its work on sustainable island living and development, which emphasizes interregional cooperation. The World Health Organization (WHO) mainstreams issues of concern to small island developing States within the overall context of its work in all developing countries. The regional offices, however, help to tailor projects and programmes to the special needs of their constituent countries.

16. Another approach used is the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process, managed by UNDP, which also helps to mainstream and integrate issues related to small island developing States, as individual countries and as part of a subregion, into the development activities of the United Nations system in support of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. At the country level, mainstreaming is also supported by other multilateral strategies, including the poverty reduction strategy papers of the World Bank and the four-year rolling national medium-term priority frameworks of FAO.

C. Financial contributions

Allocation of financial resources to small island developing States

17. According to the 2008-2009 aid statistics of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC), United Nations organizations and the Bretton Woods institutions ranked among the top 10 donors of gross official development assistance (ODA) to the 34 small island developing States for which such data were available. While there are country differences, organizations among those 10 included the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank Group. The figures cited below represent only the information available at the time the present report was finalized, in July 2011.

18. The World Bank has strengthened its financial assistance to small States, a category which includes several small island developing States. The resources allocated by IDA to small Pacific islands, except Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste, have increased from about $40 million in each of the two previous IDA cycles (fiscal years 2003-2005 and 2006-2008) to nearly $100 million in the current IDA cycle (fiscal years 2009-2011). In June 2010, the Board of Directors of the World Bank Group endorsed the Regional Partnership Strategy of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, which seeks to support economic stability, competitiveness and inclusive and sustained growth; financial assistance of up to $193 million is anticipated, in addition to technical and advisory services, for the next four years. Through its climate investment funds, the World Bank is working with other regional development banks in the Caribbean and the Pacific on the pilot programme of climate resilience. This effort provides from $60 million to $70 million in grant financing for a range of activities, including data collection, monitoring and capacity-building.

19. Small island developing States eligible for GEF funding have received financial allocations under the fourth and fifth replenishments of GEF. The total allocation for all eligible small island developing States under the fifth replenishment is about $150 million.

20. In its regular programme budget, UNESCO has devoted about $15 million to small island developing States over the past five years. In addition, approximately $8 million were provided to small island developing States through its Participation Programme, which allows national execution of activities in line with the objectives of the Programme and the budget of the Organization.

21. By early 2005, the total allocation for IFAD projects in small island developing States amounted to $148.7 million. Many of these projects are ongoing. IFAD funds are usually a mixture of loans and grants, the latter being employed particularly in the least developed countries and to alleviate poverty. The FAO Trust Fund for Food Security and Food Safety has been used to fund two regional projects, in the Pacific and the Caribbean.

Resource mobilization

22. The Small Island Developing States Unit has, over time, been able to mobilize donor funding, including to support the participation of small island developing States in the International Meeting in Mauritius, in the five-year review process of the Mauritius Strategy and, currently, in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in 2012. The Unit has also mobilized bilateral funding to support proposed projects that would benefit all small island developing States, including a project funded by the Government of Spain (with a budget of over $2.8 million) which encompasses the revitalization of the Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSnet), a virtual training programme to be implemented through the university consortium of small island developing States, and a European Union-funded monitoring and evaluation project for the Mauritius Strategy ($470,000). ESCAP and ECLAC have played a role in helping the small island developing States in their constituencies to mobilize resources for implementing the Mauritius Strategy. GEF has also supported programmes and projects for small island developing States in its areas of focus through country-specific allocations. GEF, in partnership with implementing agencies and countries, works with other donors to help secure co-financing of projects. UNDP has played a key role by mobilizing significant resources from GEF for the implementation of activities covering various areas of the Mauritius Strategy. The World Bank has also played an important role in mobilizing financial resources. In the sixteenth replenishment of IDA, there is enhanced financial support to enable small economies, including small island developing States, to make progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, small island developing States can also access other funds, such as the Least Developed Countries Fund (with access being available to the 10 small island developing States in the least developed countries group) and the Special Climate Change Fund, both of which are managed by GEF.

23. Other organizations of the United Nations system have also played an important role in mobilizing resources in their area of specialization. UNEP has been able to mobilize funds from GEF for activities and regional projects related to biodiversity, climate change, land management, persistent organic pollutants and international waters. UNEP has also mobilized funds for projects and programmes from bilateral donors and multilateral donors, such as the European Commission. WHO has successfully supported member States in mobilizing resources from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

D. Four areas of support

1. Normative support

(a) Monitoring and reporting

24. Monitoring of, and reporting on, the progress made in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy is one of the primary functions of the Small Island Developing States Unit. The Unit reports to the Commission on Sustainable Development, the main United Nations body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. The planned European Union-funded monitoring and evaluation project to be undertaken by the Unit, in cooperation with the Indian Ocean Commission, will help

to strengthen the monitoring capacity of small island developing States, as it includes country vulnerability and resilience profiling. In the Caribbean, the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee monitors the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. UNDP, UNEP and ESCAP also play important roles in supporting the process of follow-up to and monitoring of the Mauritius Strategy at various levels. Many of the agencies, funds and programmes are accountable to their governing bodies in regard to activities in support of small island developing States. GEF is accountable to its members through the GEF Council and to donors through a number of mechanisms. The Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA provides a monitoring mechanism for its programmes. Furthermore, UNDP has monitoring and reporting processes in place within each country programme, as well as in its subregional programmes. The 48 small States members of the World Bank, which group includes small island countries, gather at the Small States Forum to discuss their most pressing challenges and to hold themselves and their partners accountable for progress. The UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum provide a key monitoring mechanism at the global level for the work carried out by UNEP in relation to small island developing States. UNCTAD periodically reports to the Trade and Development Board on activities in favour of small island developing States, a denomination that was cited six times by member States in the Accra Accord, an outcome of the twelfth session of the Conference (2008).

(b) Advocacy

25. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States plays a key advocacy role within the United Nations system, in partnership with the Small Island Developing States Unit. The regional commissions work proactively to ensure that the priorities and concerns of small island developing States are reflected in regional decisions, including those concerning the implementation of the outcomes of United Nations conferences. Such outcomes help to set the global policy agenda and influence the policies advocated by international and regional organizations, as well as the types of projects that bilateral donors would be likely to fund. At some United Nations organizations, governing councils or similar bodies help with advocacy for small island developing States. The GEF Council provides a forum within which such States advocate for their needs and priorities with donor agencies, which could co-finance GEF-funded activities. UNEP also plays a key role in advocacy for small island developing States at the global, regional, subregional and national levels, particularly in areas identified by the Barbados Programme of Action that are directly related to its mandate. The advocacy role of UNCTAD focuses on substantively supporting small island developing States in their plea for modalities of special treatment. This relates to areas of critical importance to small island developing States, ranging from smooth transition measures for those that will be graduating from the least developed country category, to technical assistance that could be granted by virtue of their status. This implies enhancing the credibility of the category of small island developing State, a prerequisite to which UNCTAD has responded by adopting a list of 29 small island developing States for analytical and practical purposes.

(c) Support to the intergovernmental process

26. Support to the preparatory process for the high-level five-year review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy at the national, regional, interregional and global levels in 2010 was provided collectively by the United Nations system, in cooperation with relevant regional intergovernmental organizations, through numerous consultations held within the context of the Inter-agency Consultative Group on Small Island Developing States. Support was normative and included (a) providing national consultancy funding to small island developing States, upon request, to be utilized in undertaking national assessments; (b) commissioning regional assessments; and (c) funding, planning, organizing and coordinating both substantive and logistic arrangements for preparatory meetings in the three regions of small island developing States, for interregional meetings and for the High-level Meeting itself. Similar support is being provided in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

27. The Small Island Developing States Unit has also provided support to the negotiations held during the General Assembly on the review of and follow-up to the Mauritius Strategy and issues related to the Caribbean Sea and coral reefs, and to the planning for Small Island Developing States Day, first proclaimed by the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2005 and observed during its review sessions. The Office of the High Representative organized capacity-building events to strengthen the negotiating capability of officials of small island developing States and provided support to negotiations in meetings concerning fish stocks.

(d) Knowledge management

28. Knowledge management is one of the key functions of the Small Island Developing States Unit. The Unit is actively engaged in strengthening information activities for decision-making by small island developing States, and facilitating networking among the stakeholders. As part of its ongoing efforts, the Unit maintains a dedicated section within the website of the Division for Sustainable Development. This resource serves as a portal of access by small island developing States to information from a number of sources relevant to the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. In addition, the Unit supports SIDSnet, which was first established in 1997 as a direct follow-up to the Barbados Programme of Action. SIDSnet is currently undergoing a complete redesign and revitalization, as part of a new project funded by the Government of Spain. The network will be transformed into a much-needed central knowledge management system and platform for sharing knowledge and experience, and exploring partnership opportunities, among many other activities.

29. The ESCAP and ECLAC websites provide information for their subregions. The GEF website has a specific section that provides information on small island developing countries, networks and organizations, island country experiences in regard to GEF, the projects supported by GEF in small island developing States, topics of interest, and country information and contacts.

30. The World Bank has a subsite on small States, while FAO has a web page containing information on specific items of interest to small island developing countries. UNESCO maintains a dedicated platform which provides information on its actions on behalf of small island developing States within the framework of the chapters of the Mauritius Strategy. The Convention on Biological Diversity has a

comprehensive website which contains a web portal on island biodiversity. The UNCTAD website contains a subsite on small island developing States, which provides useful materials and links.

31. The subregional offices of UNDP have websites dedicated to small island developing States. In the Pacific subregion, UNDP has established a partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the University of the South Pacific and the Asian Development Bank which has led to the creation of the Pacific Solution Exchange, a virtual community of practice which brings together experts, policymakers and practitioners from 14 small island developing States in the Pacific region.

2. Technical cooperation/capacity-building support

32. The capacity-building support provided to small island developing States by various United Nations organizations has been steadily increasing in terms of both quantity and quality. As the needs of small island developing States have become better articulated, capacity-building support has become more targeted. Challenges and gaps continue to exist, with the vulnerability of small island developing States increasing owing to climate change, more frequent disasters, high debt and fuel costs, among many other factors.

33. The financing of the portfolio of projects designed to benefit small island developing States that are carried out by the Division for Sustainable Development, including the Small Island Developing States Unit, now amounts to approximately $4.7 million. These projects aim to build the capacity of small island developing States within the context of the information and policymaking tools that address knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation, national sustainable development strategies and indicators, and thematic areas such as climate change, energy, water, human security and community-based disaster management.

34. UNDP assists small island developing States by offering a broad menu of policy advisory services and by delivering development programmes that are closely aligned with national development priorities. With regard to poverty, UNDP is working with several small island developing States in the areas of financial inclusion, strengthening national capacities as regards Millennium Development Goals-based policies and aid effectiveness systems, and promoting the exchange of knowledge on social protection systems. As regards governance deficits, UNDP works closely with national parliaments to strengthen their legislative and oversight capacities and advocates for the stronger political representation of women. As regards climate change, UNDP strives to strengthen adaptive capacity and the resilience of communities, and provides policy advice to Governments on climate finance. One example of this approach is provided by the UNDP/World Bank SIDS Dock initiative, developed in partnership with the Alliance of Small Island States.

35. The Global Environment Facility is the main source of funding for programmes and projects undertaken in support of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. GEF ranked among the 10 top official development assistance (ODA) donors in respect of all small island developing States for which OECD-DAC aid statistics were reported. GEF provides funding for a wide range of projects and programmes on environment issues, including biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer and persistent organic pollutants.

36. The efforts of ECLAC and ESCAP have mainly focused on providing technical advice to the Governments of small island developing States, upon request. Various projects and activities related to the topics highlighted in the Mauritius Strategy are currently under way. Results have included policy changes influenced by the analytical inputs and policy advice provided by the two regional commissions to countries receiving technical cooperation services.

37. In 2009-2010, the United Nations Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) administered capacity-development training sessions on e-government development for eastern Caribbean States in partnership with the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD). Further, the Division has a project under development entitled "Support to ICT strategic planning in the Caribbean parliaments" whose goal is to assist the Caribbean parliaments in developing their vision and comprehensive strategic plans for the effective deployment of information and communications technology (ICT) in parliament. The project is funded by the European Union and will be implemented in partnership with CARICAD.

38. Activities carried out by UNCTAD for the benefit of small island developing States have been geared towards enhancing their capacities to find beneficial economic opportunities in current global markets and to prevent their further marginalization within the global economy. This action involves research and analysis, the provision of policy advice to individual countries and technical assistance in areas ranging from smooth transition strategies for small island developing States that are graduating from the least developed country category, to trade and investment policies. UNCTAD has the longest experience within the United Nations system in dealing with issues of specific relevance to small island developing States, having addressed such issues since 1974.

39. The capacity-building support provided by UNEP to small island developing States covers six cross-cutting thematic priorities of its medium-term strategy (2010-2013), namely, climate change, disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, environmental governance, harmful substances and hazardous waste, and resource efficiency. In the Caribbean, the efforts of UNEP are guided by its Caribbean small island developing States programme.

40. The UNESCO programme for 2010-2011 includes interventions specific to island countries across the entire range of its activities, with particular emphasis given to such priorities as climate change, cultural heritage, and the identification of locally driven approaches to sustainable development. A number of UNESCO programmes have established subprogrammes dedicated to supporting the implementation of activities in the small island developing States members of the Organization.

41. The International Fund for Agricultural Development has supported extensive projects in small island developing States. IFAD has funded 23 projects in countries of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) group, 8 projects in 4 Pacific small island developing States and 29 projects in 11 Caribbean countries. The aims of these projects include facilitating the development of pro-poor policies and programmes, managing fish resources sustainably and profitably, improving the livelihoods of coastal communities threatened by overexploitation of the marine environment, and assisting rural

households in diversifying their on- and off-farm income-generating enterprises and improving their prospects for gaining employment.

42. Among other activities, FAO works to enhance the contribution of agriculture, forestry and fisheries to the development agenda of small island developing States. It implements national and regional programmes for food security, and seeks to assist small island developing States in integrating sustainable food security policies and programmes into national poverty reduction strategies.

43. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has carried out activities aimed at bridging the digital divide between small island developing States and the rest of the world. Efforts undertaken by ITU have focused on reforming the telecommunication sector of these countries to enable the introduction of new structures that are more conducive to faster and sustained telecommunication development, with well-managed and modern networks, and ensuring the achievement of universal access to such services.

44. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has trained government officials in various small island developing States in the areas of child protection and education in emergencies. It has supported the review and revision of policies designed to ensure the educational rights of children during disasters, as well as the study of the impact of climate change on children in respect of survival, development, protection and participation issues.

45. The World Bank has focused its efforts on aligning assistance with the priorities of individual countries and harmonizing aid programmes with those of other agencies so as to boost aid effectiveness. In the Pacific, the World Bank has been active in taking the small States agenda forward, developing a targeted and innovative lending programme, and implementing a responsive programme of country-based activities. In the Caribbean, it has provided flexible support for disaster mitigation, including contingent loans and analysis of the insurance market in relation to natural disasters.

46. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has been engaged in the development and strengthening of national intellectual property systems and strategies to promote economic, social and cultural development in the small island developing States of all three regions. Efforts have included the protection of traditional knowledge, regional patent systems, and the formulation of national intellectual property strategies.

47. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has been active in promoting a number of national and regional projects among small island developing States, mainly in the area of energy.

3. Analytical support

(a) Publications

48. Overall, the publications of United Nations organizations related to small island developing States have been issued mostly on a non-recurrent basis over the period 2005-2010. Very few have focused solely on such States but many organizations have released thematic or generic development-related publications that encompass their interests or are relevant to them.

49. Publications of organizations of the United Nations system on themes of direct interest or relevance to small island developing States include the following: (a) UNCTAD publications on trade and development; (b) the UNDP *Human Development Report* and other general development-related publications; (c) the UNESCO booklet entitled "Islands in a sea of change: UNESCO's intersectoral platform for SIDS" (Paris, 2009); (d) the wide range of technical reports prepared by the Convention on Biological Diversity, in collaboration with UNEP; IUCN, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and others, on issues such as invasive alien species, biodiversity and tourism; (e) the two recent publications prepared by the Division for Sustainable Development for the five-year review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, entitled *Trends in Sustainable Development: Small Island Developing States*;[11] and "SIDS-SIDS success stories: an innovative partnership in South-South cooperation" (prepared jointly with UNDP); (f) the study entitled *Enhancing Pacific Connectivity* (ST/ESCAP/2472), prepared by ESCAP with the support of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation and the Government of Turkey;[12] (g) the wealth of ECLAC publications, including "Economic survey of the Caribbean", "Preliminary overview of the economies of the Caribbean", "Caribbean development report" and reports in the *Studies and Perspectives* series; and (h) the series of thematic and country-specific papers exploring the role of government policies and, in particular, social policies for the promotion of social development and economic transformation, focusing on 11 small island developing States, prepared by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat.

(b) Data and statistics

50. Some organizations of the United Nations system publish data specific to small island developing States and allow users to access country-specific data. The *UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics* focuses on the group of 29 small island developing countries identified by UNCTAD as its operational list. The World Bank is one of the prime sources of statistics and data for all countries, including small island developing States, in particular in regard to economic data. UNEP provides a range of environmental information through the publications listed on its website, including the State of the Environment series, as well as environment-related information on individual countries. The section dedicated to small island developing countries on the UNESCO website contains links to statistics and data on key areas of interest, such as education statistics, and information on research and development, and access to the Data Centre which contains over 1,000 types of indicators and raw data on education, literacy, science and technology, culture and communication. UNESCO also provides assistance to member States in improving their statistical and analytical capacities. Through FAOSTAT, FAO provides data and statistics related to agriculture and food security, including for small island developing States. It is envisaged that, through the revitalization of SIDSnet, a dedicated web portal containing a broad range of data and statistical information related to the sustainable development of small island developing States will soon

[11] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.10.II.A.12.

[12] United Nations publication, Sales No. 08.II.F.14.

be available online. A special issue of the United Nations *World Statistics Pocketbook* was prepared by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States in collaboration with the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

51. At the regional level, ESCAP and ECLAC help to improve the statistical capabilities of the countries in their respective regions by strengthening national statistical infrastructure and promoting improvement in data quality, international comparability and the appropriate use of new techniques. In the Pacific, donors, United Nations organizations and multilateral organizations are working together to strengthen national disaggregated data and information systems through the 10-year Pacific statistics strategy. In the Caribbean, UNICEF, in partnership with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), has supported the development of online DevInfo databases to enable the sharing of national data on children in the CARICOM secretariat (CARICOMInfo) and Saint Lucia (HelenInfo), while the secretariat of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States and the Governments of Barbados, Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have developed desktop versions of their databases. Furthermore, in 2009, the United Nations Statistics Division supported the CARICOM Secretariat along with its member States in formulating Caribbean Specific MDG indicators (CSMDGs) and in 2010, helped develop the capacities of the staff of national statistical offices of the CARICOM member countries with respect to the techniques and procedures used in editing population and housing census data.

4. Coordination mechanisms

52. Coordination mechanisms for activities related to small island developing States within the United Nations system use a diversity of approaches at the national, regional and global levels.

53. At the national level, each UNDP office coordinates the activities of United Nations organizations by bringing them under the umbrella of the United Nations country team. The country team delivers coordinated services supporting the sustainable development goals and priorities of the country in order to promote the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

54. At the regional level, the regional coordination mechanism in the Caribbean promotes a partnership among ECLAC, UNEP and the secretariats of CARICOM, the Association of Caribbean States and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. In the Pacific, membership in the Sustainable Development Working Group of the Council of Regional Organizations for the Pacific includes both United Nations and non-United Nations regional organizations in the region. The support provided by UNDP is coordinated through subregional offices in Fiji and Samoa (for the Pacific) and in Barbados (for the Caribbean), and by a focal point at headquarters. There is no coordination mechanism for the small island developing States of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) region, owing partly to the lack of a specific subregional coordinating office and partly to their geographical spread.

E. Better coordination

55. Progress in regard to coordination has been mixed. At the global level, the Small Island Developing States Unit has the primary role for coordination of support for small island developing States within the United Nations system, through its role as both chair and convener of the Inter-agency Consultative Group on Small Island Developing States. The Inter-agency Group, which currently has 24 members, is an informal coordinating mechanism in which the focal points of all relevant United Nations and non-United Nations organizations hold consultations, exchange information and views, undertake joint planning and promote collaborative efforts in support of small island developing States. The Inter-agency Group has been instrumental in providing coordinated support to the five-year review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, especially at the national and regional levels. There is ongoing enhanced inter-agency collaboration in providing normative, analytical and capacity-building support to the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in 2012. Collaboration is also under way on the preparation of key reports of the Secretary-General.

56. At the regional level, ESCAP and ECLAC, through their subregional offices, have worked in close collaboration with other United Nations entities and regional organizations to coordinate the support provided by the United Nations system to small island developing States. ECLAC and ESCAP are assisted by non-United Nations regional bodies, such as CARICOM, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Pacific Islands Forum. Through the work of these two regional commissions, small island developing States have an opportunity to become more closely aligned with other countries in the region, thus promoting regional cooperation.

57. The United Nations Development Programme has played a vital role in the coordination of activities of the United Nations system at the national and regional levels through its country and subregional offices in the Pacific and the Caribbean. This role has been supported by the network of UNDP country and subregional offices around the globe, which have helped to coordinate the development activities of UNDP and of various other United Nations organizations in support of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. This process of coordination is usually undertaken in accordance with the results of the common country assessment, which becomes the basis of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for a country or subregion. The Framework for the Pacific provides a good example of the process and purpose of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which aims to provide a coherent and coordinated "One United Nations" approach to development at the country or subregional level. Examples of small island developing States in which this approach has been adopted include Cape Verde, the Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles.

58. The United Nations Environment Programme has strengthened the delivery of activities through the use of its network of regional offices, environmental conventions, action plans and partnerships. UNEP also coordinates its activities for small island developing States through the Regional Seas Programme and the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-

based Activities.[13] UNESCO has cooperated closely with key agencies in the delivery of its programmes to small island developing States. Partner agencies include the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific and CARICOM. UNIDO has formed partnerships with UNDP, FAO, IFAD, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Trade Organization, UNEP and GEF in delivering its services to small island developing States. UNCTAD has been actively engaged with the Small Island Developing States Unit at United Nations Headquarters on issues related to the Inter-agency Consultative Group, with ESCAP on technical assistance to countries in Asia and the Pacific graduating from the least developed country category, with UNDP on the provision of direct support at the local level to various graduating small island developing States, and with regional intergovernmental organizations in the Caribbean, Pacific and AIMS regions.

III. Issues for consideration

59. The overall conclusion is that, on the whole, the United Nations system has provided small island developing States with a wide range of targeted support in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, in accordance with respective mandates. There is, however, room for improvement and enhancement in the delivery of coordinated and coherent programmes.

60. Strengthening United Nations support in accordance with the priorities identified in the Mauritius Strategy would accelerate progress towards the implementation of the Strategy and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 65/2, help to address the sustainable development challenges that continue to face small island developing States. Concerted action on critical elements would allow the efforts of the United Nations system to be more incisive. In light of these critical elements, which are discussed below, and of the lessons learned from constraints on mainstreaming and integrating issues of concern to small island developing States into the work programmes of United Nations entities, Member States may wish, inter alia, to consider the issues set out below.

A. Mainstreaming

61. The Mauritius Strategy and a number of General Assembly resolutions have highlighted the importance of the mainstreaming and integrating by United Nations entities of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy into their respective processes and programmes. One of the key conclusions of the present report is that, on the whole, United Nations entities have effectively mainstreamed the issues of concern to small island developing States into their programmes of work. This has been achieved in very different ways, according to individual mandates. The various approaches used by the organizations of the United Nations system illustrate a wide range of practices that can work effectively, given the necessary commitment and the allocation of sufficient resources.

[13] See A/51/116, annex II.

Recommendation 1

Effective mainstreaming of issues of concern to small island developing States into the work of the United Nations system can be achieved in a variety of ways. Mainstreaming does not necessarily require special stand-alone programmes targeted at these States. A strategic institution-wide approach that ensures that issues related to the priorities of small island developing States are integrated within the overall context of the global work programmes of United Nations organizations has proved to be effective. Thereafter, regional and local offices may help to tailor specific projects and programmes based on the individual needs of their constituent countries.

B. Coherent and coordinated approaches

62. One area in which progress has been mixed is that covering the creation of coherent and coordinated approaches to issues of relevance to small island developing States: some successes have been achieved in this regard, while some gaps remain to be filled. While the Small Island Developing States Unit plays a leading role in coordinating the relevant activities within the United Nations system, it has been constrained by lack of human resources despite repeated calls by the General Assembly for its strengthening. High-level mechanisms, such as the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, are unlikely, because of their comprehensive mandates, to specifically address issues related to small island developing States.

63. At the global level, the Inter-agency Consultative Group has been effective, despite its informal status, in working-level coordination of issues of concern to small island developing States. The work of this Group is enhanced by the involvement of regional intergovernmental entities from outside the United Nations system. Questions have been raised whether this mechanism should be reviewed with a view to including participation at the head-of-agency level, whether it should have a more formalized structure, and whether key outcomes of its discussions could more systematically feed into United Nations system-wide coordination mechanisms, such as the United Nations Development Group (UNDG).

64. At the regional level, UNDP subregional offices and the subregional offices of ESCAP and ECLAC play vital roles in the coordination of United Nations system activities, and are ideally positioned to monitor the implementation of activities related to the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy at the regional level. In the Caribbean, the United Nations-CARICOM Regional Strategic Framework, as a mechanism for coordinating technical assistance, could be aligned with the decisions of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee of ECLAC so that it would better reflect the views of the countries of the Caribbean. Such complementarity would ensure that the normative activities of the United Nations Secretariat are linked to the technical cooperation activities of the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies. This could help streamline the overall regional coordination mechanism, promote policy coherence and ensure that the United Nations does indeed work as one.

65. In the Pacific, the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific is an effective regional-level coordinating mechanism. The Pacific Plan Action Committee is another forum for collective monitoring, prioritization and policy oversight which would contribute to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

66. For small island developing States in the AIMS region, for which there is no one regional coordinating mechanism or United Nations regional office, a regional institutional framework for sustainable development could be developed. UNDP could play a key role in this regard, through its country offices, by helping to provide coherent and coordinated support to small island developing States, thereby promoting the "One United Nations" approach. Given the lack of a dedicated office or programme for small island developing States, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) might focus on ensuring that the special needs and priorities of the small island developing States in its region are integrated into its programme of work.

67. At the country level, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process provides an example of a good practice which helps the United Nations system to deliver a coherent and coordinated development programme. Positive examples of "One United Nations" approaches at the country level in small island developing States include those of Cape Verde, the Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles.

Recommendation 2

Coordination and coherence of support provided to small island developing States by United Nations entities need to be strengthened. At the global level, efforts might include, inter alia, strengthening and expanding the role of the Inter-agency Consultative Group on Small Island Developing States, reviewing its modus operandi, exploring the issue of its formalization, and considering its possible contribution to United Nations system-wide coordination mechanisms. At the regional level, the United Nations organizations represented in the AIMS region need to explore collectively ways and means of setting up a coordinated support mechanism for small island developing States. At the country level, efforts might include, inter alia, harnessing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process to ensure the adoption of a "One United Nations" approach in an increasing number of small island developing States.

C. Institutional support

68. United Nations entities have adopted a diversity of approaches to providing institutional support to small island developing States. Some organizations have set up specific institutions to coordinate the support provided, while others have delegated responsibility for the coordination of their activities to regional offices located within a subregion. However, in cases where island-specific issues are handled by a unit located in a division with a broader regional or programmatic

mandate, these issues can be "lost". In this regard, a dedicated office and/or focal point assists the delivery of coordinated support to small island developing States.

Recommendation 3

Although there is no one ideal mechanism for providing effective institutional support to small island developing States, setting up or strengthening a dedicated and clearly identified focal point within every United Nations entity dealing with issues of concern or thematic issues of relevance to small island developing States is vital for the effective delivery of that support to such States. The need to strengthen the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, requires that more urgent attention than ever before be paid to providing effective support to small island developing States in the four domains mentioned above, especially in the context of continuing to assist these States in addressing vulnerabilities, building resilience and making their special development case.

D. Knowledge management

69. Information and knowledge are key instruments for monitoring, decision-making and evaluation in respect of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, and all relevant organizations of the United Nations system have an important catalytic role to play in providing, analysing and disseminating such information and knowledge, within their given mandates. Websites dedicated to small island developing States, such as the revitalized SIDSnet, can facilitate effective knowledge management for small island developing States and promote partnerships, networking and collaboration among the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as among small island developing States and with other partners. Other island-specific pages on the websites of all relevant organizations should supplement and have links to dedicated websites so that access to the technical and policy resources of interest to small island developing States can be enhanced.

Recommendation 4

Websites dedicated to specific issues of concern to small island developing States, such as SIDSnet, should be strengthened, with the active involvement of all small island developing States and their partners, in order to effectively promote partnerships, share knowledge and expertise, accumulate the relevant data and information, and facilitate networking, and should have strong links to the respective websites of small island developing States. These websites should be easily accessible and contain comprehensive information on all activities of concern to small island developing States, including updated financial information on the projects and programmes being implemented.

E. One voice

70. A key lesson and success story is provided in connection with the means by which various United Nations entities have assisted small island developing States in speaking with one voice in international forums. This has helped to ensure that the priorities and concerns of those States are reflected in global and regional decisions, including in the implementation of the outcomes of United Nations conferences. At the global level, the Small Island Developing States Unit and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States have, despite limited resources, facilitated the articulation by small island developing States of their concerns and priorities to the extent possible, and enabled them to work together as a group. Positive examples in this regard include the support offered to the Alliance of Small Island States, and the assistance provided to the delegations of small island developing States on the occasion of United Nations meetings. Similarly, ESCAP and ECLAC have helped small island developing States in their regions to work together and speak with one voice at both the regional and global levels. UNESCO, through initiatives such as Small Islands Voice and Climate Frontlines, and other specialized agencies have also contributed to this process.

Recommendation 5

Small island developing States need a strong voice at the global level. The Small Island Developing States Unit, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the regional commissions in particular play an active and catalytic role in facilitating the emergence of a collective voice which can articulate the particular concerns and priorities of small island developing States. Other United Nations organizations are encouraged to play an increasingly important role in helping to give small island developing States a voice in international forums.

F. Roles and responsibilities

71. The Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy identified key roles for the United Nations system in supporting the implementation of the programme areas for the sustainable development of small island developing States. These crucial roles have been reinforced by the General Assembly in various resolutions (for example, resolutions 59/311 and 65/2). In those resolutions, the Assembly reiterated that, while primary responsibility for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy rests with the small island developing States themselves, the relevant United Nations organizations have a key role, within their respective areas of expertise and mandates, in supporting and supplementing national efforts. The present analysis concludes that the United Nations system has provided support for the national implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, ranging from the coordination of activities and funding and implementation of major projects and programmes, to the active

support provided by a wide range of specialized agencies. Small island developing States can, however, play a crucial role in ensuring that United Nations organizations are able to provide targeted support for their national efforts. There are various opportunities for small island developing States to work in partnership with the organizations of the United Nations system in tailoring services to their special needs and priorities. At the national level, these opportunities encompass, inter alia, the global support programme for national capacity self-assessments funded by GEF, the common country assessments undertaken by UNDP, and the United Nations Development Assessment Frameworks coordinated by the United Nations system. In order to benefit fully from the support of all relevant United Nations bodies, agencies, programmes and funds, these and other related processes need to be harnessed by each small island developing State.

Recommendation 6

By harnessing processes such as the national capacity self-assessment, common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, small island developing States and the United Nations system have various opportunities to work in close partnership. Enhanced collaboration among organizations of the United Nations system, also involving all relevant non-United Nations regional organizations, would allow small island developing States to benefit fully from the support of the United Nations system, and would help the system to better tailor its services to the special needs and priorities of those States.

G. Making a stronger case for small island developing States

72. Several organizations have been undertaking analytical work that addresses the particular vulnerabilities of small Island developing States. UNCTAD focuses its analytical work on the structural disadvantages and development needs of small island developing States, as well as on the criteria for the members of the least developed countries grouping, which includes some small island developing States. UNDP has undertaken a study on debt sustainability.

73. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat and the World Bank have been working on, inter alia, climate change adaptation, risk assessment and insurance schemes. Threats to biodiversity have been addressed within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Recommendation 7

Analytical work undertaken to address the special vulnerabilities of small island developing States and explore ways to help build their resilience needs to be continued by all concerned United Nations organizations in a coordinated and comprehensive manner, with a view to enabling a stronger case to be made in favour of small island developing States within the various climate change, economic and trade forums.

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Eradication of poverty and other development issues: women in development

Integrating a gender perspective into national development strategies

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/217 on women in development, the present report focuses on the integration of a gender perspective into national development strategies, supported by the United Nations system and donor countries. It highlights gender-responsive budgeting as a good practice in that regard. Recommendations are provided for consideration by the Assembly.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 64/217 on women in development, the General Assembly recognized the mutually reinforcing links between gender equality and poverty eradication and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It also urged Member States and the United Nations system to empower women to participate actively and effectively in the development, implementation and evaluation of national development and/or poverty eradication policies, strategies and programmes.

2. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution at its sixty-sixth session, including on integrating a gender perspective into national development strategies. Based on inputs received from Member States and the United Nations system,[1] the present report reviews measures taken by Governments, support provided by the United Nations system, the role of donors and the new aid effectiveness agenda. It highlights gender-responsive budgeting and planning as a good practice example and concludes with recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.

II. Background

3. Despite progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals[2] as a result of economic growth in some developing countries and targeted efforts in some areas of the Goals, such as health and education, significant gaps remain between urban and rural areas and for those who are the most disadvantaged economically or because of sex, age, disability or ethnicity. Children from the poorest households, living in rural or in conflict areas, are the most likely not to be attending school, especially if they are girls. Access to secondary education remains restricted for girls in some regions. Higher levels of education are still critical in order for girls and women to acquire the necessary skills to meet current labour market demands.

4. Maternal deaths continue to be concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, which together accounted for 87 per cent of such deaths globally in 2007. In 2009, while women constituted 51.6 per cent of the population living with HIV globally, young women aged between 15 and 24 made up 60 per cent of people living with HIV within that age group.[3]

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[1] Contributions were received from the Governments of: Denmark, El Salvador, Greece, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Spain and Togo. The following United Nations entities provided inputs: the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank.

[2] Unless otherwise noted, the data in the present report is drawn from *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2011* (New York, 2011).

[3] UNICEF, *Opportunity in Crisis: Preventing HIV from Early Adolescence to Young Adulthood* (New York, 2011).

5. Worldwide, women's access to employment, resources and decision-making positions remains a challenge. The share of women in non-agricultural paid employment increased only five percentage points over almost two decades, from 35 per cent in 1990 to 40 per cent in 2009. Progress has been even slower in recent years, owing to the financial and economic crisis of 2008-2009. According to recent estimates, with the same access to productive resources as men, women could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5-4 per cent, reducing the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17 per cent.[4] Over the past 15 years, the percentage of women parliamentarians increased only from 11.6 per cent in 1995 to 19.3 in 2011, with nine countries still having no women parliamentarians at all.

6. To overcome these challenges, Member States have repeatedly recognized that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and that promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women is a key development goal and an important means for achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals, including through the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

7. During the 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2010 (see E/CN.6/2010/2), a number of common strategies were identified as being critical to the achievement of gender equality goals. These include the strengthening of the gender mainstreaming strategy to ensure that the needs and priorities of women and girls as well as men and boys are systematically and effectively taken into account in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies, plans and resource allocations across all policy areas, including national development strategies. Other positive factors for the achievement of gender equality goals include visible leadership, enhanced capacity-building in government bodies at all levels, stronger involvement of national mechanisms for gender equality in policymaking, increased allocation of gender-specific resources and development and the use of monitoring and accountability systems to track results.

8. Intergovernmental bodies have repeatedly reaffirmed the importance of gender-sensitive national policies for progress towards gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals. In the 2010 ministerial declaration of the Economic and Social Council, Member States committed to ensure that national development plans systematically contributed to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Similarly, in resolution 65/1, adopted at its High-level Plenary Meeting in 2010 on the Millennium Development Goals, the General Assembly recognized the need for gender mainstreaming in the formulation and implementation of development policies.

9. The Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (see A/CONF.219/3/Rev.1) includes objectives to guide national policies and international support measures for the achievement of sustained, equitable and inclusive economic growth. Gender equality and the empowerment of women is reflected as a priority area and as essential to progress towards social and human development and the eradication of poverty in least developed countries. Least developed countries committed to establishing and continuing to implement

[4] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *The State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture, Closing the Gender Gap for Development* (Rome, 2011).

national development plans that take into account the needs of women and girls. Commitments also addressed the strengthening of the role of relevant national mechanisms; scaling-up of resources for gender equality and the empowerment of women; and promotion of effective representation and participation of women in all spheres of decision-making. Development partners committed to providing financial and technical support in order to implement policies and programmes that enhance women's economic and income-generating opportunities, productive employment and access to productive resources.

10. To enhance the effectiveness of development assistance provided by the United Nations, the triennial comprehensive policy review (see General Assembly resolution 62/208) recognizes that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to development, and that United Nations development assistance should be aligned with national development plans and strategies. The resolution has a strong focus on implementation and provides detailed guidance in several areas, including gender equality and women's empowerment. The resolution calls for further alignment of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework cycle with national processes.

III. Integrating a gender perspective into national development policies and strategies

11. Drawing on inputs from both Member States and the United Nations system, section III sets out efforts made to integrate a gender perspective into national development policies and strategies, which are typically multi-year documents outlining national priorities for development, include poverty reduction strategies, country coordination mechanisms and sectoral plans such as rural development strategies. They are generally based on coordinated processes to achieve economic, social and environmental objectives and are guided by the principles of country ownership, integrated policies across sectors, broad participation, capacity development, a focus on outcomes and implementation, and means of implementation.

12. Building on the definition of gender mainstreaming in Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2, integrating a gender perspective into national development planning and strategies entails assessing and analysing the situation of women and men in a given country, identifying specific obstacles to gender equality, systematically developing gender-sensitive strategies and programmes across sectors, and monitoring and evaluating outcomes, in order to achieve gender equality goals and address the inequalities faced by women and girls. While gender mainstreaming efforts are required across all sectors and in all stages of policymaking, those efforts need to be complemented by targeted interventions to address specific gaps or challenges faced by women and girls, as a necessary component of the two-pronged strategy for the promotion of gender equality.

13. Governments, with support from the United Nations system as requested, use different approaches to integrate a gender perspective into their development strategies. Increasingly, gender issues are identified as a priority or a cross-cutting issue that is systematically mainstreamed across all stages of policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

14. For instance, in El Salvador, the National Development Plan 2010-2014 incorporates gender as a cross-cutting issue and identifies poverty eradication and gender-based discrimination and violence among its priority areas. In Indonesia, the development workplan includes gender mainstreaming as one of the guiding principles in all national development programmes and activities.[5] With a long-standing commitment to gender equality, New Zealand requires all Government agencies to base their policies on gender analysis. Gender implication statements are also required for all papers submitted to the Cabinet Social Policy Committee.

15. In other cases, countries dedicate a separate section in their national development strategies to specific priorities related to women and girls, such as education for girls, reproductive health, the participation of women in decision-making, and addressing violence against women. In its Eleventh National Five-Year Plan (2011-2015) the Syrian Arab Republic aims at reducing gender inequality and empowering women in sectors such as higher education, health and poverty reduction, but only partially in other sectors such as justice.[6]

16. In a number of countries, United Nations entities have provided support to national Governments to ensure the integration of a gender perspective during the implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes of national development strategies. For instance, UNDP supported more than 20 countries in the Asia Pacific region towards integrating a gender perspective in national planning and implementation frameworks in 2010. In 2009, UNDP, in collaboration with UNFPA, provided technical support to the Government of Maldives to ensure that a gender perspective was incorporated in its five-year national development strategy and in the monitoring and evaluation frameworks of the strategy. In the Republic of Moldova, UNDP supported gender mainstreaming into various development plans, including the national development strategy. UN-Women, in collaboration with UNFPA, provided technical support to the Government of Indonesia in the development of gender mainstreaming indicators for the national development plan. In Jordan, UNFPA, in collaboration with UNDP, supported the Government's efforts to strengthen the monitoring mechanisms for progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and national priorities, including goals related to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

17. Many countries have in place gender equality action plans that complement national development strategies, but the relationship between the two policy instruments differs greatly by country. Some countries take specific measures to align national action plans on gender equality with national development strategies. In other countries, national action plans on gender equality are included as a chapter in national development strategies. Experience suggests that the alignment of the two policy instruments is more successful when the gender equality action plan is formulated as a result of national and sectoral consultations or when explicit linkages are established outright during the formulation processes of both documents.[7]

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[5] ESCAP, *Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: Regional Study — Asia and the Pacific* (Bangkok, 2010). Available from http://www.unescap.org/sdd/publications/gender/2010-Regional-Study-on-NWM.pdf.

[6] Based on inputs from UN-Women.

[7] Ibid.

18. National machineries for gender equality are essential components in all efforts to achieve gender equality. They commonly are responsible for promoting, supporting and monitoring the incorporation of gender perspectives in all policy areas, including national development strategies. They take the lead in developing and monitoring the implementation of gender equality plans, strategies and programmes. They are often responsible for coordinating and monitoring gender mainstreaming and capacity development across government bodies. Where national machineries work closely with civil society organizations, particularly women's organizations, and involve them in the development of national policies and strategies, there is a stronger collective voice to advocate for the key priorities that women are facing in the country. National machineries are also involved in strengthening the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data across sectors (see E/CN.6/2010/2).

19. It is therefore critical that national machineries for gender equality have at their disposal the resources, capacities and skills necessary to effectively discharge their mandates. A 2010 study on national mechanisms for gender equality found that achievements have been made on multiple fronts, including greater political visibility in achieving the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women, increased use of the gender mainstreaming strategy across all regions, development of capacity in addressing gender equality issues, and improvements in data collection and analysis. However, national mechanisms for gender equality continue to face challenges in their roles as catalysts for gender mainstreaming, including marginalization within the governmental structure, frequent reorganization and change in leadership, diffuse and poorly designed mandates, limited staff and budgetary resources, inadequate technical expertise to address gender equality within both national mechanisms as well as other government bodies, weak coordination among various components of national mechanisms, ineffective monitoring and evaluation systems, and limited capacity in data collection and analysis.[8]

20. A number of Member States that submitted inputs for the present report provided examples of measures taken and results achieved by national mechanisms. The Salvadorean Institute for the Development of Women developed the 2011-2014 Women's National Policy in support of the national development plan. The Policy addresses women's economic empowerment as a key area, and aims at the elimination of all direct and indirect forms of discrimination within current labour and economic policy instruments.

21. In Fiji, the Women's Plan of Action (2009-2018), prepared by the Department of Women, includes policy objectives of the National Development Plan — Strategic Framework for Change, and the Pacific Platform for Action 2005-2015. The Plan provides a gender analysis of Government policies and programmes and identifies critical areas for action and appropriate strategies for the Government.

22. In Afghanistan, the Ministry of Women's Affairs integrated a gender perspective into programmes related to the national development strategy. As the Chair of three mechanisms within the national development strategy, the Ministry

[8] Rounaq Jahan, "Strengthening national mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women: a global synthesis study", prepared for the Division for the Advancement of Women (now UN-Women), (New York, 2010). Available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/TechnicalCooperation/GLOBAL_SYNTHESIS_REPORT_Dec%202010.pdf.

prepared the chapter on gender equality and conducted a final gender review of all other chapters, with the goal of addressing gender equality as a cross-cutting strategy.[9] The Ministry, with the support from UN-Women, made efforts to operationalize the national action plan for women of Afghanistan, including by supporting line ministries and local governments in implementing their commitments under the Plan and monitoring its implementation in 18 line ministries.[10]

23. In New Zealand, the Ministry of Women's Affairs supports and advises Government agencies on policies that have a direct impact on women, and prioritizes its work on areas that need improvements, including increasing the number of women in leadership roles, combating violence against women, and achieving greater economic independence for all women. Similarly, in Australia, the Women's Interdepartmental Committee takes a whole-of-government approach to gender mainstreaming by ensuring that all policies, services and initiatives are gender-sensitive and by closely evaluating their impacts on women and men.[11]

24. In Denmark, the Minister for Gender Equality is responsible for Government initiatives in the field of gender equality, through the coordination, development and implementation of Government policies. The Minister also advises Parliament on matters concerning gender equality.

25. In Italy, the Department of Equal Opportunities coordinated a project that provided 12 ministries with workshops and training courses on the integration of a gender perspective in various sectors. The project included support on developing social and economic policies that foster gender equality and the empowerment of women, and on building capacities in integrating a gender perspective in planning processes and policy design.

26. In some countries, line ministries cooperate with the national machineries for gender equality to integrate gender perspectives in sectoral policies and programmes. In Togo, the Ministry of Grass-roots Development, Crafts, Youth and Youth Employment works closely with the national machinery for gender equality and non-governmental organizations, including through awareness campaigns and capacity development. In its National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality (2010-2013), Greece calls for the cooperation between the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and other line ministries to mainstream a gender perspective across all sectors.

27. United Nations entities also supported the efforts of Member States to integrate a gender perspective into development plans across various sectors and areas such as health; employment; job and life skills training; human trafficking; reproductive health; the education and training of women, women's political participation and the human rights of women; leadership and decision-making; conflict resolution; and violence against women. UN-Women supported gender mainstreaming efforts across a variety of sectors through multiple channels, including by providing technical assistance to Member States, facilitating dialogue between Governments and civil society, collaborating with the national machineries

[9] ESCAP, 2010.

[10] Based on inputs from UN-Women.

[11] ESCAP, 2010.

for gender equality, and strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations, especially women's organizations.

28. Developing the capacity of staff and institutions, including through training, guidelines and other tools, is a key element towards ensuring that gender issues are more systematically reflected in national policies and their implementation. In Afghanistan, the Ministry of Women's Affairs provided guidance for the drafting of the national development strategy on mainstreaming gender. In Mexico, the Secretary for Social Development revised the operational rules for the country's different programmes to ensure gender-responsive implementation. New programmes are now expected to make explicit references to their contribution to promoting gender equality, through the gradual mainstreaming of a gender perspective and the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data and indicators on the beneficiaries and results of the programmes. In Senegal, the Gender Technical Committee, with representatives from the Government, civil society, and the United Nations Gender Theme Group, produced a note on the key issues that need to be addressed in order to integrate a gender perspective in the third poverty reduction strategy paper.

29. Integrating a gender perspective systematically into the design and implementation of national development strategies requires sector-level interventions as well as cross-sectoral approaches and partnerships among all stakeholders, including line ministries, development partners, civil society, women's networks and the private sector. For example, the Togo Ministry of Grass-roots Development, Crafts, Youth and Youth Employment organizes stakeholder forums on the development, implementation and monitoring of national development strategies every other year to review progress. The Government of Indonesia stipulates that women's groups be represented in the processes of development planning in order to ensure that women's concerns are incorporated in the national development planning process.[12]

30. In some countries, collaboration between the national machineries for gender equality and United Nations entities has ensured the participation of civil society and women's groups in the national development planning processes. For instance, in Ecuador, UN-Women worked with the national machineries to support and facilitate discussions between the Government and civil society. As a result, gender equality was well integrated in the National Plan for Good Living, which contains 46 policies aimed at achieving gender equality and a gender equality approach in 12 strategic objectives.[13]

31. In India, UN-Women, UNFPA and UNICEF, in collaboration with the Government, coordinated multiple consultations between the Government and women's organizations during the formulation of a five-year national development plan. That initiative enabled the incorporation of grass-roots women's priorities and needs in the five-year plan, and facilitated an open, participatory and transparent process.[14]

32. The effectiveness of national development strategies and gender equality action plans greatly depends on and benefits from the inclusion of annual targets

[12] Ibid.
[13] Based on inputs from UN-Women.
[14] Ibid.

that can be costed and that are accompanied by sufficient and sustainable budgets to implement them. In El Salvador, the law on equality and equity recognizes the need for adequate public resources to be approved in the next national public budget. The special law for women's right to a life free of violence mandates the allocation of public resources towards its implementation. The law provides that the Government, through the Ministry of Finance, must ensure annual budget allocations in the national budget to the institutions in charge of implementing the law.

A good practice example: gender-responsive budgeting and planning

33. In recent years, an increasing number of national Governments have taken concrete measures to support gender-responsive planning and budgeting in a systematic manner. Gender-responsive budgeting refers to Government planning, programming and budgeting that contribute to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It entails identifying the interventions needed to address gender equality gaps in Government policies and budgets, and monitoring and evaluating the financial resources allocated for the implementation of Government commitments on gender equality. Such efforts can help Governments decide whether and how policies need to be adjusted and where resources need to be reallocated for the achievement of gender equality goals.

34. Since it was first pioneered in Australia in the 1980s, gender-responsive budgeting has received growing attention from both Governments and non-governmental organizations. The interest intensified internationally when contributing Governments to the Beijing Platform for Action emphasized that Governments should make efforts to systematically review how women benefit from public sector expenditures, adjust budgets to ensure equality of access to public sector expenditures, and achieve the gender-related commitments made in other United Nations summits and conferences (see A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1, para. 346).

35. There are currently over 60 country initiatives for gender-responsive budgeting in all regions. A number of United Nations entities, including UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, are supporting gender-responsive budgeting initiatives worldwide. In 2008, UN-Women, in collaboration with the European Commission, initiated a programme aimed at integrating gender-responsive budgeting into the aid effectiveness agenda. During the initial phase of this three-year programme, research was carried out in 10 developing countries[15] to investigate how gender-responsive budgeting tools and strategies have been used in the context of aid modalities. In the study, UN-Women and the European Community suggested that the integration of a gender perspective into national planning, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation systems and instruments could enhance the effectiveness of aid in implementing gender equality objectives, through improved management and delivery of aid by the recipient countries. Thus, gender-responsive budgeting approaches needed to be applied to donor practices, national processes as well as joint coordination

[15] Cameroon, Ethiopia, India, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Peru, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

mechanisms.[16] Based on the study findings, the second stage of the programme is being carried out and provides targeted technical support to five countries.[17]

36. In Latin America, gender-responsive budgeting has been introduced in many countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Budget guidelines issued by the ministries of planning, economy or finance in a number of those countries require sectoral ministries and local governments to allocate budgets for programmes addressing gender equality concerns. In Ecuador, a budget classifier was developed by the Ministry of Finance specifically to track the Government's allocations and spending towards the equal opportunity plan. In addition, several academic institutions are now contributing to building the capacity of civil servants in the area of gender-responsive planning and budgeting. Academic institutions such as the Latin American School of Social Sciences offer courses on gender and macroeconomics and gender-responsive budgeting to civil servants from the departments of planning and budgeting in Ecuador. At the local level, the participatory budget processes adopted by a number of countries in the region, especially in Ecuador and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, served as an entry point for women to engage actively in local policymaking, through local hearings and consultations with civil society organizations. Similarly, women's organizations in Brazil were successful in urging the Government to expand the financial resources for programmes on women's health and violence against women.[18]

37. In Morocco, efforts have been made since 2002 to integrate gender equality concerns into planning and budgeting instruments and processes as part of the public finance management systems and public administration reform. For three consecutive years starting in 2007, the budget guidelines issued by the Prime Minister included recommendations in relation to addressing gender equality concerns through sectoral plans and budgets. A report on gender is annexed to the annual budget, in which sectoral ministries report on their performance with regard to gender-sensitive indicators. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance, a comprehensive capacity development approach has evolved and contributed to strengthening the capacity of planning and budgeting staff in the Ministry of Finance and sectoral ministries. The Ministry of Finance has also actively facilitated South-South learning with a range of countries, including Ecuador, Haiti and Senegal.[19]

38. In Rwanda, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning is taking the lead on the country's efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in national planning and budgeting processes. In response to the high demand for capacity development, the Rwandan School of Finance and Banking has developed a training programme on gender-responsive economic policy management for budget and planning officers, with a focus on poverty reduction strategies and macroeconomic policies. The course prepares participants to understand the linkages between macroeconomic policies and gender inequality. At the sectoral level, Rwanda has sought to integrate

[16] UNIFEM (now UN-Women), *How Can Aid Be Gender-Responsive in the Context of the New Aid Modalities?*, Gender Responsive Budgeting and Aid Effectiveness Knowledge Briefs Series (New York, 2009).

[17] Cameroon, Nepal, Peru, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

[18] Based on inputs from UN-Women.

[19] Ibid.

a gender perspective into the agriculture sector by supporting an umbrella of community-based civil society organizations to develop capacity on gender-sensitive budget analysis and budget tracking.[20]

39. In the United Republic of Tanzania, under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, capacity development efforts are targeting economists and budget officers in selected ministries, departments and agencies to apply gender-responsive budgeting at the sector level and align sector programmes with gender equality indicators in the country's national strategy for growth and reduction of poverty. Moreover, five countries in Africa[21] are currently investing in improving women's access to resources and services at the local level, through gender-responsive planning, programming and budgeting to better respond to women's priorities.[22]

40. In Nepal, the Ministry of Finance introduced gender-responsive budgeting in 2007-2008 within the overall reform of the budgetary system and required ministries to categorize their programme budgets according to the extent to which they supported gender equality using five indicators: women's capacity development; women's participation in programme formulation and implementation; benefit incidence of public expenditures on women; support to women's employment and income generation; and positive impact on women's time use and care work. The budget categorization has facilitated the establishment of a monitoring system that allows greater institutional accountability for the strengthening of results-oriented management and the continued use of gender-responsive budget analysis to inform planning and programming. A gender-responsive budget committee oversees the initiative.[23]

41. Evidence suggests that gender-responsive budgeting has helped address the gaps between Government commitments on achieving gender equality goals and the allocation of resources; promote accountability on the use of public resources to women; and increase the transparency of policy processes through the participation of civil society. Moreover, gender-responsive budgeting initiatives have made contributions in other areas, including building the planning and budgeting capacities of Government agencies, especially in the context of budget reform; introducing policy changes and developing operational frameworks to mainstream gender perspectives into budgeting systems; promoting the participation of gender equality advocates in planning and budgeting processes; and supporting gender-responsive budget monitoring initiatives by civil society.[24]

IV. Integrating a gender perspective into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework

42. The United Nations makes concerted efforts to help Member States to integrate a gender perspective in their development strategies, including through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, a common strategic framework for the

[20] Ibid.

[21] Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania.

[22] Based on inputs from UN-Women.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level. The Framework is formulated based on the analytical and collaborative effort of the Common Country Assessment, which examines the national development situation and identifies key development issues. The Framework provides a collective, coherent and integrated United Nations system response to national development priorities within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals as well as other internationally agreed development goals.

43. Since the first roll-out of development assistance frameworks in the late 1990s, efforts have been made to strengthen gender perspectives within development assistance frameworks and common country assessments. To review the progress of gender mainstreaming in the assessment/framework process, multiple studies have been commissioned, with the most recent one examining 51 assessments/frameworks completed between 2006-2009.[25] Gender equality was highlighted as a cross-cutting theme and gender equality outcomes were specifically delineated in slightly over half of the 51 frameworks reviewed. All the assessments were found to cite relevant gender-differentiated data, especially data on women's health and girls' education.

44. Planning and programming concentrated heavily on the two traditional areas of women's health and girls' education, though increasingly development assistance frameworks also focused on women's political participation. About one half of the frameworks focused on strengthening women's voices and participation in decision-making. Very few addressed women's livelihood issues and access to productive resources.[26]

45. Addressing violence against women has increased in importance, with about one quarter of all development assistance frameworks including it in the priority outcome areas,[27] compared with relatively little attention received in earlier generations of frameworks.[28] Surprisingly, very few frameworks made substantive reference to country experiences in implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and reporting thereon, either as a diagnostic or accountability tool. Moreover, while many countries cited traditional norms and practices that discriminated against women as barriers to women's ability to choose and participate in decision-making, few proposed concrete measures or activities to address them.[29]

46. The most progress has been achieved in the area of monitoring and evaluation. Significant improvement was made over earlier generations of development assistance frameworks in areas including developing clear gender equality outcomes, formulating gender equality outputs connected to other outcome areas, and making clear connections between what needed to be measured and the indicators in the monitoring and evaluation frameworks.[30]

47. The study identified the following factors that contributed to the better incorporation of gender equality priorities in development assistance frameworks:

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[25] Study commissioned by the United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality on strengthening gender equality in United Nations development frameworks (New York, 2010).

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Study commissioned by the United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality on gender analysis and gender mainstreaming in common country programming (New York, 2006).

[29] United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality, 2010.

[30] Ibid.

strong senior management support and adequate resources for gender theme groups; a cogent analysis of key issues linked with clear programme outcomes; a robust implementation process and progress tracking mechanism; clearly articulated gender equality outputs and indicators; strong technical expertise to address gender equality issues during the preparation of the frameworks; and mechanisms to specify the allocation of resources to gender-related activities.[31]

48. Despite being identified as a limitation in the previous review conducted in 2006,[32] information on resources allocated specifically for gender equality purposes continued to be lacking. In general, few development assistance frameworks specified the amount or percentage of resources allocated to gender equality outcomes either as a separate area of work or as part of achieving other framework outcomes. In the latter case, resources were allocated per output, but it was difficult to determine the allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment within the outputs. The highest proportion of funds allocated specifically to gender equality in a Framework was 9 per cent, but the average was between 3 and 4 per cent.[33]

49. Strong commitments to gender equality in policy guidance and guidelines are critical to strengthen gender-responsive planning and programming. The common country assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidelines, first developed by the United Nations Development Group in 1999 and most recently revised in 2010, recognize gender mainstreaming and targeted gender-specific interventions as key strategies of United Nations-supported analysis and strategic planning, and include gender equality as one of the five interrelated programming principles that must be applied for the country analysis and preparation of the frameworks.[34]

50. The guidelines emphasize alignment with national development priorities and strategies as well as partnership with women's groups and gender equality advocates in the preparation of frameworks.[35] Although about one half of the 51 frameworks demonstrated clear linkages to national development priorities, only a small number reported involvement of national machineries for gender equality and consultations with women's organizations as part of the process.[36]

51. Many country teams utilized gender theme groups as the main coordination mechanism to ensure that gender dimensions were reflected in frameworks. While research has shown that having a strong gender theme group contributes to better integration of a gender perspective in frameworks,[37] United Nations country teams, in some regions, are gradually shifting towards theme groups that mirror the framework priority areas that often do not include gender equality as a standalone outcome.

52. Gender theme groups are often responsible for ensuring a gender perspective in development assistance frameworks and other United Nations country development programmes. In some countries, gender theme groups are also involved in the

[31] Ibid.

[32] United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality, 2006.

[33] United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality, 2010.

[34] United Nations Development Group, "How to prepare a United Nations development assistance framework: guidelines for United Nations country teams" (New York, 2010).

[35] Ibid.

[36] United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality, 2010.

[37] United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality, 2006.

formulation of national development strategies by providing technical and analytical assistance to national Governments. For instance, in Viet Nam, the Gender Programme Coordination Group coordinated a gender analysis of the draft 2011-2015 national development strategy. While many gender theme groups function as a United Nations inter-agency coordination mechanism, there are an increasing number that are co-chaired by the country's national machinery, with participation from Government and civil society representatives, as well as theme groups that are co-chaired with donors and other stakeholders. The Gender Programme Coordination Group in Viet Nam, for instance, has been jointly chaired by UN-Women and the country's national machinery for gender equality since 2008.[38]

53. To ensure accountability in integrating gender equality in development assistance frameworks, the guidelines mention gender audits and United Nations Development Group Performance Indicators on Gender Equality as key tools for assessing progress on gender mainstreaming at an operational level. The gender audit methodology, developed by ILO, uses a self-assessment approach to monitor and evaluate the achievement of gender equality based on objective data and stakeholders' perceptions. In 2008, United Nations country teams were urged to establish a baseline for their performance, using the United Nations Development Group Performance Indicators on Gender Equality, together with the gender audit methodology, to measure changes over time. As a result, about 25 country teams started to undertake the assessment in 2008 and, by the end of 2010, 14 country teams completed the assessment[39] and were in the process of implementing their findings to achieve a stronger response to gender equality.[40]

54. Another related accountability mechanism of the United Nations system is the annual report of the resident coordinator, in which the performance of country teams is reviewed annually. In 2006, the template and guidance of the resident coordinator annual report were strengthened by including a section on gender equality, in order to capture more systematically those results that align with the request by the triennial comprehensive policy review (General Assembly resolution 59/250).

55. Since 2004 the annual reports of resident coordinators have been reviewed by UNIFEM (now UN-Women) staff, to track trends in reporting on gender-related issues. The annual reviews have shown a significant increase in reporting by United Nations country teams on gender equality initiatives. The highest rate of increase has been in reporting on those initiatives aimed at ending violence against women, from 28 country teams reporting in 2004 to 96 in 2009. There are many factors that could have contributed to the increase, including the campaign of the Secretary-General entitled "UNiTE to end violence against women" and growing Government demand in response to the advocacy of women's human rights defenders. The support provided to national gender equality machineries for capacity development saw a fivefold increase during 2004-2009, with 53 resident coordinators reporting country team efforts in 2009, compared with 11 in 2004. Assistance to programmes that strengthen reproductive health and reduce maternal mortality, and support to reporting on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms

[38] Based on inputs from UN-Women.

[39] The assessment reports of the 14 country teams using the United Nations Development Group Performance Indicators on Gender Equality can be found on the website: http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=222&SO=DATE#s2.

[40] United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality, 2010.

of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action also increased significantly over the same period (see E/2011/112 and UNW/2011/9). A number of specific funding mechanisms such as the Spanish Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund and the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women have contributed to the increase in joint gender equality programming (see UNW/2011/9).

V. Role of donors in integrating a gender perspective in development assistance

56. The aid architecture landscape has changed significantly in the past few years since the adoption in 2005 of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Seeking to improve the management and delivery of official development assistance, the Paris Declaration outlines a number of commitments by donors and development partners, building on five principles, including national ownership, harmonization, alignment, managing for results and mutual accountability. However, the Paris Declaration has been criticized for being gender-blind as the targets and indicators identified therein do not place sufficient emphasis on achieving gender-responsive outcomes nor do they ensure the gender-responsiveness of processes and instruments.

57. In 2008, in response to the call for a gender perspective in the aid effectiveness agenda, donor countries adopted the Accra Agenda for Action, which has shown improvement in linking aid management systems with human rights and gender equality standards. Donors recognized the importance of gender equality in aid and development effectiveness, and agreed to ensure that development policies and programmes should be designed and implemented in ways consistent with their international commitments on gender equality.

58. In 2011, the Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey included for the first time an optional module on gender equality.[41] Survey responses[42] highlighted donors' efforts to align with partner countries' gender equality priorities. Nevertheless, donors did not allocate adequate human and financial resources to fully implement their commitments on gender equality. The use of sex-disaggregated data was found to be related to an enhanced focus on gender mainstreaming and increased budget allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment. However, sex-disaggregated data were rarely collected systematically and limited support was provided by donors for collecting such data. In addition, sex-disaggregated data were not always used to guide the decision-making process.

59. More concerted efforts are needed to ensure that the commitments of Governments towards gender equality and women's empowerment are fully reflected in the design, implementation and monitoring processes of all official development assistance. The Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, to be

[41] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Findings and messages from the gender equality module of the 2011 Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey", Paris, 2011. Available from http://www.gender-budgets.org/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&task=doc_details&gid=1253&Itemid=565.

[42] A total of 24 countries responded to the optional module on gender equality: Albania, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Gabon, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Peru, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Togo and Zambia.

held in November 2011 in Busan, Republic of Korea, offers an opportunity for Member States to go beyond the political affirmation of the centrality of gender equality to nationally owned development assistance, and move towards integrating gender-responsive budgeting into the aid management system and building capacities of national Governments, in order to implement gender-responsive planning, budgeting and monitoring.

60. Apart from the aid effectiveness agenda, donors and international organizations have also undertaken initiatives to strengthen gender equality in development cooperation. For instance, during 2007-2010, the European Commission, UN-Women and the ILO International Training Centre implemented the European Community/United Nations Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace programme in 12 aid recipient countries, including post-conflict countries.[43] Among other objectives, the programme sought to ensure full integration of gender equality and women's human rights in the national development processes and cooperation programmes supported by the European Commission. While the programme was found to be effective in preparing the ground for changes in institutions and behaviours, continued efforts are needed in order to make a profound and sustainable change in the behaviours of the European Commission and other donors in relation to gender equality and aid effectiveness.[44] Future work should follow a strategic and multipronged approach that addresses both short- and long-term needs with a range of interventions, including training, technical assistance, resource development and accessibility of information.

61. In 2010, the European Union adopted its Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development (2010-2015),[45] which aims to reinforce coordination within the European Union regarding gender equality policies in development cooperation with partner countries, in order to achieve a greater impact on the ground. The Plan further commits the European Union to take advantage of the pioneering work carried out by the European Community/United Nations Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace, and by the Network on Gender Equality of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee in the area of mainstreaming gender perspectives in the aid effectiveness agenda. It offers a framework for the European Union to renew its commitment to gender equality.

62. A number of countries have made a commitment to mainstreaming gender equality in all stages of development cooperation programmes to promote human rights, sustainable development, poverty eradication and economic growth. In Denmark, gender equality is one of five priorities in its strategy for development cooperation entitled "Freedom from poverty — freedom to change", which was launched in 2010 and builds on the momentum created by the Danish campaign to promote Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals. The strategic objectives are to ensure equal rights, equal access to and control over resources and equal opportunities for political and economic influence for women and men.

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[43] Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Suriname and Ukraine.

[44] UN-Women final report to the European Commission on the European Community/United Nations Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace.

[45] See European Union Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development (2010-2015).

63. In Spain, gender in development is one of five key priorities of its Cooperation Plan 2009-2012, which aims at strengthening gender equality through sector and cross-cutting actions in cooperation programmes and projects and by promoting equality policies. Spain's strategic equality plan for 2008-2011 explicitly mentions gender mainstreaming as its guiding principle and lists development aid as one of its strategic objectives. It includes the call for a gender impact analysis of any normative or executive decision-making and the need to change political and technical institutional procedures accordingly.

64. The development of mechanisms and tools on gender equality issues has been critical to strengthening sector programmes and building the capacity of staff working on effective gender mainstreaming. For instance, the New Zealand Aid Programme aims at improving the gender-related outcomes of its development assistance programmes by providing staff members with gender analysis tools, offering gender mainstreaming training, monitoring activities, and recruiting a gender specialist to promote gender mainstreaming. The Danish International Aid Agency and the Department of Gender Equality developed e-learning materials that have been incorporated in the staff development plans of several ministries. With European Union funding, the Department on Gender Equality is developing a web-based tool that can support public authorities and institutions in their work on gender mainstreaming in all public planning and administration. Since 2005, Japan has appointed gender focal points in its 96 embassies in recipient countries in order to monitor good practices in gender-sensitive projects.

65. Donors, bilateral development partners and international organizations play a key role in ensuring that financial resources allocated for gender equality purposes are sufficient and increased at both the national and international levels. In 1997, to enhance the capacity and accountability of donors in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through aid, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development developed the gender equality policy marker as part of the Creditor Reporting System, a database used by the Development Assistance Committee to facilitate monitoring and coordination of the Committee members' activities.

66. The gender equality policy marker provides a classification system to identify the extent to which programmes, funds or activities benefit gender equality and women's empowerment, based on a marking system with three values: "principal objective", "significant objective", and "not targeted to the policy objective". An activity that targets gender equality as a "principal objective" means that gender equality is an explicit objective of the activity and fundamental in its design. "Significant objective" indicates that gender equality is an important but secondary objective of the activity, and is not one of the principal reasons for undertaking the activity. "Not targeted" means that the activity is screened against, but is found not to be targeted to, the policy objective.

67. In recent years, efforts have been made to adopt a gender marker within the United Nations system, including UNDP, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, UNFPA, UNICEF, and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund.[46] Those efforts have shown the gender marker system to be more than a measuring tool, and that its application has led to

[46] Based on input from UN-Women.

enhanced quality of programming across sectors responding to the different realities of women and girls.

68. In addition to the gender marker system, individual donor countries also track resource allocations in their development assistance programmes. In 2009, about 22 per cent of the total development assistance of Denmark was used for financing activities that, directly or indirectly, aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The allocations for gender-related activities are registered either as targeted gender interventions or as mainstreamed interventions. The Government of Norway reported that NOK 868 million was channelled through 89 partners (multilateral institutions and Norwegian non-governmental organizations) working on economic development and trade, for which the promotion of women's rights and gender equality was either a main or a secondary objective.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

69. The achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women is essential to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. National planning processes offer important opportunities to address gender perspectives. While progress has been uneven, Governments have undertaken many initiatives, such as identifying gender issues as a priority or a cross-cutting issue that is systematically mainstreamed across all sectors in all stages of the policy process. Nevertheless, in some countries, gender perspectives are only partially integrated in specific sectoral areas.

70. Beyond awareness-raising, capacity-building and training activities, concerted efforts are needed for the effective incorporation of gender perspectives into national development policies and strategies. Common strategies include developing capacity and expertise in line ministries as well as in national mechanisms for gender equality; strengthening accountability, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; ensuring sufficient human and financial resources; and promoting the participation of civil society, particularly women's organizations, in the national development planning processes. Gender-responsive budgeting has been developed as an effective tool to ensure that adequate resources are allocated for the achievement of gender equality goals. That requires technical expertise to be developed in a range of ministries, including ministries of finance.

71. The United Nations system and donors are increasingly taking measures to integrate gender perspectives in all development cooperation work, including through their support for national development plans. Emphasis should be placed on integrating gender perspectives in all development cooperation work, building on the national ownership of gender-mainstreaming initiatives. Measures to ensure the consideration of gender perspectives in development assistance include: mechanisms to track resources allocated to achieve gender equality goals; coordination mechanisms with a gender equality focus; and accountability mechanisms to measure and track performance. The provision of bilateral and multilateral funding must be well coordinated and clearly targeted for gender equality purposes, and gender perspectives must be systematically integrated into the aid effectiveness agenda.

72. The General Assembly may wish to call on Member States and all relevant actors to undertake the following actions:

Gender mainstreaming efforts

- Systematically integrate a gender perspective into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all national development strategies and policies and sectoral plans, and ensure the alignment between national action plans on gender equality and national development strategies
- Build on lessons learned, expand and deepen efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in the United Nations Common Country Assessments and Development Assistance Frameworks
- Strengthen efforts by UN-Women to work with United Nations country teams in helping Member States to integrate a gender perspective into national development policies and strategies

Participation and accountability

- Strengthen the impact and contribution of national mechanisms for gender equality in all stages of national development planning processes and across all sectoral plans
- Strengthen the role and capacity of gender theme groups by supporting United Nations country teams on gender equality issues and facilitating a gender perspective in national development strategies and plans
- Enhance the transparency of and participation in national development planning processes by involving civil society, especially women's organizations, in the formulation and monitoring of national development strategies and other related policy instruments

Resource allocation and tracking

- Develop and adopt effective measuring mechanisms to monitor and track the national, United Nations and donor resources allocated to achieve gender equality goals
- Strengthen capacities for gender mainstreaming by allocating adequate financial and human resources within line ministries, establishing and/or strengthening dedicated gender equality units, providing capacity development for technical staff, and developing tools and guidelines
- Ensure that donors allocate adequate resources for the full implementation of their commitments on gender equality, expand the scope of donor support provided to gender equality priorities across all sectors and in strategic areas, and improve the impact and quality of financing for gender equality

Measures and tools

- Develop and strengthen methodologies and tools for systematic gender-responsive budgeting across all sectors in national development planning and budgeting processes, and for effective application of gender-responsive budgeting in donor practices, including joint coordination mechanisms

- Improve and systematize the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data, enhance capacity development in that regard, and develop gender-sensitive indicators to support policymaking and national systems for monitoring and reporting on progress and impacts

Least developed countries

- Ensure the full implementation of the commitments on gender equality in the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries